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ABSTRACT

In 1977, a Board of Trustees was established for Hudson County Community College (HCCC), in New Jersey, with a mission to provide entry-level occupational certificates and associate of applied science degrees to students seeking preparation for employment. This original mission statement specifically stated that HCCC was not to be a comprehensive institution, but as the college's service area and the needs of its clientele have changed, its mission statement has also been revised to adapt to the changing conditions. In February 1983, the first revision was undertaken, widening the scope of the college's mission to include transfer-oriented curricula. Then, in September 1992, a 6-month process was initiated by representatives of the college and the external community to develop a new mission statement to reflect the addition of a liberal arts degree program. This process included reviews of exemplary mission statements, state documents, and educational and economic projections for Hudson County. In addition, questionnaires were sent to over 1,117 college and community members soliciting perceptions regarding an appropriate mission for HCCC. Responses were received from 367 individuals, representing HCCC students and faculty, Hudson County businesses, and community agencies. The resulting mission statement dedicates the college to general education, career education, developmental education, community services, professional development, transfer, and liberal arts. The 1993 mission statement is included. Details of the mission survey (internal and external samples and respondents) are appended. (ECC)

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HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DEVELOPMENT OF A MISSION STATEMENT FOR A COMPREHENSIVE URBAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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To be presented at the Symposium
On Developing Strategies For Excellence In Urban Education,
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Abstract

Hudson County Community College (HCCC) serves a 100 percent urban population of 553,099 in a county of 46.42 square miles. The population exhibits all of the characteristics associated with contemporary urban America, e.g. high unemployment, low education, racial/ethnic and linguistic diversity, and high percentage of recent immigrants.

This paper traces the process through which the college made the transition from a limited mission community college to a comprehensive community college. Throughout this process it was necessary to take into account both the general characteristics of a comprehensive community college and the particular needs of Hudson County and it residents.

From its founding in 1974 to 1977, the college was structured as a consortium of the three four-year colleges in Hudson County (Jersey City State College, Saint Peter's College, Stevens Institute of Technology). In 1977 an independent Board of Trustees based on the statutes regulating community college boards in the state was established.

One of the first acts of HCCC's reconstituted Board of Trustees, in redirecting the college to a more secure footing, was to adopt the following mission statement:

> The mission of Hudson County Community College is to provide high-quality, low-cost postsecondary education to students not served by the four-year colleges in the county. Unlike many of the community colleges in the state system, Hudson County Community College does not aspire to be a comprehensive institution. Instead, its mission is to provide entry-level occupational and career certificate and AAS degrees to students who need preparation for employment or upgrading of current skills in their chosen vocation. The College strives to satisfy other educational needs of non-traditional students and "new clientele," as it pursues its principal mission directed at the world of work.

From 1977-1983, the college's programmatic mission was geared exclusively to the provision of occupational curricula. However, as the college continued developing it became possible to consider widening the scope of the college's mission to include transfer-oriented curricula in order to accommodate more fully the needs of the county's population. In February 1983, the Board of Trustees, therefore, revised the mission statement, as follows:

> The mission of Hudson County Community College is to provide high-quality low-cost community college programs and services that meet the diverse needs of a broad and heterogeneous population. The College's primary programmatic mission is to provide certificate and associate degree programs to students who seek preparation for employment or upgrading of occupational skills through programs of study designed to lead to immediate employment or direct transfer to baccalaureate programs.

As an open access institution, the College strives to meet other educational needs of its heterogeneous population, including the need for the development of programs, services and assistance necessary to successfully enter into and complete a certificate or associate degree program.

This revised statement did not alter the basic philosophical commitment of the college to career-oriented programs of study. The statement did, however, recognize the necessity for transfer (AS degree) programs in a number of career areas. In the 1984-85 academic year, the college instituted transfer (AS degree) programs in engineering science and computer science.

The possibility of offering the Associate in Arts (AA) degree had been examined a number of times. Although the option was always available, and the college did accept "undecided" students, it was agreed that the contractual model made it reasonable for the college to refrain from instituting the AA. Students interested in the liberal arts were counselled concerning opportunities at other accredited colleges. Finally, in 1991, in recognition of our obligation to provide educational opportunities afforded by the AA degree, HCCC instituted its only AA (liberal arts) degree program.

At its September 21, 1992 meeting, the Board of Trustees of Hudson County Community College authorized the president of the college "to implement a process that will culminate in the submission of a draft revised mission statement to the Board no later than April 1993." The Board recognized that the mission statement must be revised periodically to reflect the current and projected needs of the county and its residents, and that input into the mission statement must come from a broad range of representatives of the college community and of the communities the college serves (external community).

For a period of six months representatives of the college community and of the external community were involved in an inclusive and multi-dimensional process leading to the development of a draft mission

statement appropriate for the new comprehensive urban HCCC.

The draft mission statement development process involved a review of 67 exemplary mission statements from a national sample of comprehensive community colleges; a review of relevant documents from the New Jersey Department of Higher Education and from the Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; a review of relevant documents concerning the present and projected educational, demographic, economic, and employment characteristics of Hudson County, its municipalities and of its residents and work force; a review of Shaping the Future: County, Community and College (1992), (a report of the Hudson County Community College Task Force), and a review of Hudson County Community College: Blueprint Project (1993), (a report of the Blueprint Project Team); analysis of responses to a mission questionnaire distributed to over 1100 representatives of the college community and of the external community; input received from approximately 100 representatives of the college community and of the external community who attended an all day forum to consider issues related to the mission of HCCC as an urban comprehensive community college; and comments on draft mission statements requested from members of the college community and from approximately 575 representatives of the external community.

A description of the groups included in the college community sample and in the external community sample appears in Appendix A.

A copy of the Background Documents For The February 27, 1993 Forum To Consider Issues Related To The Mission Of HCCC As An Urban Comprehensive College was distributed to each participant in the forum. That document includes:

1. Draft Revised Mission Statement Resolution of HCCC's Board of Trustees. (September 21, 1992).
2. Mission, Goals and Objectives Statement from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education (1982). Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.
3. A Comprehensive Urban Community College: A Vision for the Future (1991). Department of Higher Education.

4. Philosophy, Mission and Goals Statement from Hudson County Community College, Master Plan, 1986-1991: A Strategic Vision (1986).
5. Overview of National Sample of 67 Mission Statements from Comprehensive Community Colleges (1993).
6. HCCC Mission Survey Results (1993).
   Comments from College Community
   Comments from External Community
   Responses from College Community and from External Community

[Included with the Background... document was a copy of the Draft Mission Statement, and a copy of Community Colleges in the 1990's. Glen Gabert, (Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Fastback 318, 1991)].

At its April 13, 1993 meeting, the Board of Trustees adopted a new mission statement reflecting the college's transition to a comprehensive urban community college. The three mission statements (1977, 1983, 1993) show in a dramatic fashion the transition of the college from one that "does not aspire to be a comprehensive institution" (1977) to a college that begins its mission statement with the words "Hudson County Community College is a comprehensive urban community college" (1993). The new comprehensive mission statement dedicates the college to high quality programs in the areas of collegiate education (transfer and liberal arts); general education; career education; developmental education; community education and services; and professional, business and economic development.

MISSION STATEMENT

Hudson County Community College is a comprehensive urban community college. The mission of the College is to offer high quality programs and services which are affordable, accessible, and community-centered. All programs and services are designed to meet the educational needs of a linguistically and ethnically/racially diverse community, and to promote the economic, technological, cultural, social, and civic development of Hudson County and its service areas.

The College is committed to equal educational opportunities for traditional and non-traditional students who can benefit from its programs and services without regard to race, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, gender, disability, economic status, or educational background.

The provision of a supportive and affirmative educational environment, and the principles of lifelong learning, excellence, and opportunity are central to all programs and services. To implement its mission, the College sets forth the following general goals:

- To provide liberal arts and science courses and associate degree programs that will prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities.
- To provide courses, certificates and associate degree programs that will prepare students for immediate employment or provide for career enhancement.
- To provide general education courses to ensure that students can think critically and analytically, communicate effectively, solve mathematical problems, participate as informed citizens, appreciate cultural diversity and global interdependence, and are information and computer literate.
- To provide support services including counseling, job placement, aptitude and skills testing, financial aid, academic advisement, and basic skills development to help students succeed and benefit from academic programs.
- To provide programs and services appropriate to the linguistic diversity of the community.
- To provide educational and support services to businesses and industries to meet work force needs and to promote the economy of the County.
- To provide not-for-credit courses and programs including conferences, seminars, lectures, workshops and other activities to meet the continuing education, professional, and enrichment needs of residents of the County and of members of organizations within the County.
- To provide for collaborative relationships with local school districts; other colleges and universities; public and private agencies; and business, industrial, professional and labor associations to promote high quality and efficiency in all programs and services.

RESOLUTION:

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Trustees accept the Mission Statement commencing April 13, 1993 for the new comprehensive urban Hudson County Community College.

APPENDIX A

MISSION SURVEY:
COLLEGE COMMUNITY SAMPLE AND EXTERNAL COMMUNITY SAMPLE

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COLLEGE COMMUNITY SAMPLE AND EXTERNAL COMMUNITY SAMPLE

The Samples

For the period of early December 1992 through early February 1993, a mission questionnaire was distributed to members of the college community and to representatives of various groups within the county/community. An overview of the two samples (College Community, External Community) appears in Table 1.

Thirty-three percent (N=367) of the 1,117 individuals in the total sample responded. Forty-one percent (N=226) of the College Community responded, and twenty-five percent (N=141) of the External Community responded.

TABLE 1 - SUMMARY OF SAMPLES

	COLLEGE COMMUNITY	EXTERNAL COMMUNITY	TOTAL
Questionnaires Distributed	547	591	1138
Questionnaires Undelivered	3	13	16
Envelopes Returned with No Response	---	5	5
Sample	544	573	1117
Respondents	226	141	367
Percent of Sample Responding	41	25	33

The College Community Sample is briefly described in Table 2, and the External Community Sample is briefly described in Table 3.

On December 8 and 9, 1992, questionnaires were sent to 547 members of the college community. The various constituent groups surveyed included a systematic sample of 100 students (full- and part-time students in the same proportion as they are enrolled: 60 full-time and 40 part-time students), graduates (all who had responded to the survey of the graduates of the classes of 1986, 1988, 1990, and 1991), and all employees (full- and part-time faculty, administrators, chairs, deans, directors, counselors, skills specialists, support staff, maintenance workers, security workers, and coaches). Five questionnaires were returned for lack of a correct mailing address; while we were able to forward two of these to new correct addresses, three (one graduate, one part-time student and one full-time student) remained undelivered.

In all, 226 responses were received. To get some indication of the composition of the sample and of the respondents, a comparison was made according to constituent group. The results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 - COLLEGE COMMUNITY: COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS AND SAMPLE

Group	SAMPLE[1]		RESPONDENTS	
	N	%	N	%
Students	98	18	28	13
Full-time Faculty/Counselors	49	9	41	18
Part-time Faculty	155	28	60	27
Admin./Chairs/Deans/Directors	53	10	28	12
Clerical/Maintenance/Security	77	14	22	10
Graduates	94	17	37	16
Coaches/Skills Specialists	18	3	10[2]	4
Total	**544**	**99[3]**	**226**	**100**

1 Excludes returned questionnaires (two from students and one from a graduate).
2 Includes respondents who did not answer the question regarding their HCCC affiliation.
3 Due to rounding, the total does not add to 100.

The two largest groups in the sample were part-time faculty (28%) and students (18%). However, although part-time faculty (27%) was also the largest group among respondents, full-time faculty/counselors (18%) was the second largest group among respondents. The full-time faculty/counselors had the highest response rate (84%) and the students had the lowest response rate (29%).

During the period from late January through early February 1993, questionnaires were sent to 591 representatives from various groups within Hudson County. The sample included representatives from business and industry; education; government; community groups and agencies; health and human services; and law, insurance, and real estate.

The sources for the names of individuals and organizations used to generate this sample were: (1) individuals and organizations known to the college, e.g., advisory committee members, participants at meetings of the Board of Trustees, employers known to the Career Training Center, community representatives previously identified for college-related activities; and (2) the following membership directories: Membership Directory of the American Management Association, Membership Directory of the Hudson County Chamber of Commerce, Human Services Directory of the United Way of Hudson County, Membership Directory of the New Jersey School Boards Association, Membership Directory of the Hudson County Personnel and Guidance Association, and County of Hudson: Directory of County and Municipal Officials.

Thirteen questionnaires were returned for lack of a correct mailing address and five of the return envelopes included with the questionnaires were mailed back empty. By the response deadline of February 15, 25 percent of the sample (141 of 573) had responded.

To get some indication of the composition of the sample and of the respondents, a comparison was made according to identification group. The results are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3 - EXTERNAL COMMUNITY: COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS AND SAMPLE

Group	SAMPLE		RESPONDENTS	
	N	%	N	%
Business/Industry	221	39	42	30
Government	52	9	12	9
Education	104	18	37	26
Community Group/Agency	54	9	19	13
Health/Human Services	59	10	16	11
Law, Insurance, Real Estate	62	11	9	6
Other	21	4	6[2]	4
Total	573[1]	100	141	99[3]

1 Excludes undelivered questionnaires (N=13) and envelopes returned with no questionnaire (N=5).

2 Includes respondents who did not indicate group identification.

3 Due to rounding, total does not add to 100 percent.

The two largest groups in the sample and among the respondents were business/industry and education. The business/industry representatives account for 39 percent of the sample and for 30 percent of the respondents; and the education representatives account for 18 percent of the sample and for 26 percent of the respondents. The response rate for the business/industry group was 19 percent, and the response rate for the education group was 36 percent.